1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

and as there must be such a link if they live in the same community, owing to the rules of exogamy, it follows that people who live together are all *gaat nyiet* to one another. However, it is in relation to the dominant lineage of a community that the concept is mainly employed and is politically important. When people are not members of this lineage it is stressed that they are *gaat nyiet* to it. Nuer of other clans can never more closely identify themselves with the dominant lineage, because, for ritual reasons, they must remain autonomous units, but politically they accrete themselves to it through this kinship category. Moreover, outside ritual situations, being *gaat nyiet* to a dominant lineage gives people complete equality with it, and their accretion to it is often expressed in terms of lineage structure, so that a man will often give his ascent to the woman of the dominant lineage who bore one of his ancestors, and thus graft himself, through her, on to their tree of descent; though this is more usually done by Dinka than by Nuer. It is, however, the common practice for children of strangers who have been brought up at the home of their maternal kinsmen, who are aristocrats, to regard themselves as members of their mother's lineage, except in ceremonial situations, and to consider its members, rather than their father's lineage, as their true kinsmen.

Dinka who have not been adopted commonly trace their ascent to a female Nuer forebear and through her they graft themselves into a Nuer lineage and are accepted as members of it in ordinary social relations. Thus a Dinka often gives his ascent to the dominant lineage of his community through a woman, and sometimes through two or three female links, and though this is generally evident from female prefixes it cannot always be known. These Dinka individuals incorporate themselves into the structure of a Nuer lineage through their mothers, since they have no lineage structure of their own. This is different from the stressing of a female link (*gaat nyiet*) which unites a group of Nuer strangers or of Dinka to the dominant lineage of their tribal section and also from matrilineal modes of reckoning descent due to matrilocal conditions of residence, which may be temporary.

Owing to exogamous rules lineages are thus linked by

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

621 613 614 602 The village site belongs to the Riaagh lineage of the Keunyang maximal lineage of the Gaatbol clan, the dominant clan in Leek tribal area of which Karlual area, where Nyueny is situated, is a section. Members of that lineage with their wives and concubines and their affines account for ten out of the twenty-six homesteads. The people of Nyueny hamlet, the central and northern parts of the village, are known as 'the children of Jany', and Jany's descendants with their wives and concubines and affines account for another ten homesteads. The children of Jany', whose *tut* is Karlual (homestead 9), count collectively as *gaatwac*, children of the paternal aunt, or, as Nuer often put it, *gaatnyiet*, children of daughters, to the Riaagh lineage, whom they call *gaatnar*, children of the maternal uncle. The senior Riaagh men are the 'bulls' of the village in the tribal sense of the word *tut*.

621 602 It will again be observed that the village is not an exclusive lineage group (with its wives) but is a cluster of kin (including affines). In this case, however, there is a lineage core to the village community, and this core is that branch of the dominant clan of the tribe which owns the village site. Some members of its collateral minimal lineage, the Gom, also live in the village. I draw attention to further typical features. We saw that at Konye many of the heads of families were living there because of affinal relationships with other members of the village. The counterpart to this is the relationship of sister's son to mother's brother, for when the children of a resident sister or daughter grow up in a village those who stand in an affinal relationship to their father stand in an avuncular relationship to them. This is a very significant feature of Nuer local communities and from it follows another common feature: in course of time a maternal link of this kind may be treated as though it were a paternal link and therefore within the genealogical structure of the principal lineage of the community. Jany's mother Duai is so treated. Nuer say of a woman who has this structural position that 'she has become a man'. Cognation becomes regarded for ordinary social purposes within community life as equal to agnation. A sister's son–mother's brother relationship may come about in a village not by a man going to live with his wife's people but by widows bringing their children to live with their own people after their husbands have died, a mode of residence which in certain circumstances may continue after the deaths of the mothers. This

• [541]

[cf. ext. 116, p. (12) -- Analyst]

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

588 Another factor which has certainly had some influence in bringing about attachments of outsiders to groups of agnatic kin other than their own is the custom of concubinage, the different [591] forms of which I describe in detail later. It is a very common practice for widows to leave their dead husbands' homes and to take lovers in the villages of their parents, or to go to reside in the [593] villages of their lovers. When they do so they take their young children with them, and though the sons almost invariably return to their paternal homes before initiation, they have grown up in the homes of their maternal kinsmen, or of their foster fathers' kin, and may have so strong an affection for them that they later return to reside with them, at any rate for a time, when they are married men and their own masters.

Widows, whether living in their maternal villages or in their dead husbands' villages, attract lovers, sometimes from the village, sometimes from a neighbouring village. In either case a new social tie is established, and the lovers may continue to cohabit with the widows as members of their communities for long periods and nurture the children they beget by them. A poor man is only too glad to obtain a housekeeper and mate without expense by means of either widow-concubinage or unmarried concubinage, and if he is an unadopted Dinka he may remain with the concubine and his children by her.

There are in Nuerland a considerable number of unmarried concubines. The sons they bear to lovers become the legal children of these lovers by payment of cattle, but they do not feel so securely attached to the homes of their fathers as do children born of the union of marriage, and there is a tendency for sons of the same woman by different fathers to stick together, usually wherever their mother may be, especially if the fathers are dead or if they do not possess large herds.

591 There are two other facts to be taken into consideration. Among Nuer it is not uncommon for a man to make his home among his wife's people, though in my experience a true Nuer usually returns to his own people eventually. As I have explained, sons-in-law who live with their wives' people are often Dinka, and Dinka are likely to remain with their affines, as they may have no kin of their own to return to; but one also finds Nuer in the same position. These may be persons who for one reason or another prefer to live apart from their paternal kin, or they may be poor men who cannot afford to pay the full bridewealth, part of which is forgone by the

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

wife's family in view of the fact that the man who has married their daughter has joined their community and is bringing up his children as members of it. They may even give him some of their own cattle to help him build up a herd. The second fact to be taken into consideration is the Nuer custom, for various reasons not always observed, by which the eldest child of a marriage is brought up by his, or her, maternal grandparents. A child brought up in his maternal kinsmen's village naturally feels that in some respects it, and not his paternal kinsmen's village, is his home.

Cattle are a powerful element, often the deciding consideration, especially in the minds of unadopted Dinka captives or immigrants, in a man's choice of residence. A Nuer cannot live for long without cattle, and he who possesses none must attach himself to the byre and herd of some kinsman. Men with only a few beasts also sometimes find it a convenience to tether them in the byre of a kinsman rather than build a byre of their own. One often finds that the reason a man decides to live with one of his maternal kin, with a paternal aunt, with one of his affinal kin, or with the family of a widow-concubine, is that he knows that the person he intends to reside with will allow him to be a member of the household, will give shelter to his animals if he has any, and will help him to start a herd if he lacks cattle entirely; whereas his paternal kinsmen are unable or unwilling to do so, or, in the case of many Dinka, are altogether absent.

As a further conclusion, I remark again that the drawing together by, and into, the lineage system of the many different strands of kinship (and affinity) which compose the network of social ties in each local community gives the community its unitary character and fixes its position in tribal structure. The points at which they are drawn together are the 'bulls' of the kinship clusters, and especially the tribal 'bulls', those men who are persons not only of age, wealth, and character, but also members of the dominant clan of the tribe—tribal aristocrats. These tribal 'bulls' are the centres of clusters of kin, but they are also agnates, and each has in relation to the others a structural position in the lineage system of the dominant clan. Through them, therefore, all the tribesmen are attached to the dominant clan of the tribe and all the local communities are assimilated to the highly consistent structure of its segments, in which they are conceptualized. It is

585 own and a sleeping-hide, a brush, and a couple of gourds for ablutions. When her husband comes to visit her in her father's home-
●[591] stead he sleeps with her in this hut. She continues in all other respects to lead the life she led before marriage, and after her husband's visits she hangs up the hide and domestic utensils and sleeps with her unmarried sisters. On these visits her husband stays at a neighbouring homestead as he cannot eat in the home of his parents-in-law and ought not to be seen there at all. When someone tells the wife that her husband has come, so that she may prepare for him, she feigns annoyance or lack of interest, pretending that she is still unmarried, a shyness she keeps up with third persons, though she is at ease when alone with her husband. When everyone is asleep he visits her and spends the night with her, leaving before any of the bride's people are about. Her parents are supposed to know nothing of his visits, though, of course, they know all about his movements, and it is even said that his mother-in-law may rise especially early and squint through a crack in the door of her hut to see him depart. I was told that should he oversleep and his mother-in-law see his spears outside her daughter's hut, she makes them forfeit, and he would be ashamed to ask for them back. It is not till a child has been born that the husband is accepted by his wife's people as one of themselves. He is then the father of their daughter's child and through the child has a kind of kinship with them. Till this happens the husband continues to lead the life he lived before marriage, a bachelor life with his younger brothers in their father's byre. His wife visits him only on rare occasions and for a formal purpose, as when, at harvest time, she brings him coverings she has made for the grain on the drying-platforms, or when she takes him a bundle of well-cooked porridge made from the first millet of the year—a pretty custom known as *puthene kuan*, honouring with porridge.

842 All are equally anxious for a child to be born, the husband and wife because they want a son, and the wife's parents and kin because they cannot, without risking complications, dispose of the cattle of the marriage till a first-born completes the union. Those whose daughters they might wish to marry would not be happy about accepting such cattle as bridewealth in case they had sud-
853 denly to be returned to the husband. When a child is born the
571 mother remains with her parents till she has weaned it. This is a
862 suitable regulation, because after bridewealth has been paid the,

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

husband's father is likely to be short of lactating cows, while the wife's parents will have plenty of milk from their herd. If, for some reason, the wife goes to live with her husband before the child is weaned, it may not be weaned without the consent of her parents, and I have seen a husband pay several cattle to atone for contravention of this rule. A *keagh*, first child, belongs to *cieng mandongni*, the home of his maternal grandparents, and if he is weaned in his father's home he returns to live with them, a boy till he is initiated and a girl till she is betrothed. This is the rule, though there is variation in practice, depending on the ability of the maternal grandparents to support the child and on the relations between them and their son-in-law.

Shortly after the birth of her first-born the wife, now called *paidap*, a nursing mother, brings the baby to her husband's home and lays him in the ashes of the hearth in the centre of his grandfather's byre, a rite known as *nong puka*, the bringing to the ash. Beer has been prepared and is drunk by a few senior kinsmen of the husband who live in his hamlet. It is a domestic, and not a public, ceremony. The wife spends a few days in her husband's home, and returns with the child to the village of her parents. She has as yet no hut of her own in her husband's homestead.

When his first-born has been weaned the husband builds his wife a hut in his father's homestead facing the family kraal. He then goes to ask his parents-in-law for his wife. They do not deny him, even if, as is likely, some of the bridewealth cattle are still owing. They give her a horn spoon and a gourd and she takes these with her to her husband's home. The gift of a spoon is emphasized by Nuer in speaking of marriage, because it is a recognition that the woman is now, in the full sense, a wife, who will eat of the porridge of her own gardens with the milk of her own herd. She now milks her husband's cows instead of her father's and hoes the gardens of his home and not those of her childhood. Before she is given a spoon, even if she hoes a garden at her husband's home she takes the harvest back to her father, or she may live at her husband's home and cultivate in her father's village, if it is not far. It is only when a man's bride has borne him a child and tends his hearth that she becomes, in the Nuer sense, his wife. She then makes a mud windscreen, and the spirit of his lineage comes to dwell there. Later his father tells him to build a byre and gives him a few cows to start a herd.

4: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1948 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

of the husband's kinsfolk outside, who, squatting in front of it, likewise washes his hands in the water, and then fishes out the bracelet. The pot is returned to the hut and a different maiden and a different kinsman repeat the action of the first pair. All the close kinsfolk of the husband—his father's brothers and sisters, his mother's brothers and sisters, and his own brothers and sisters, and so on—are supposed to receive a bracelet, but, in fact, persons standing in some of these relationships will be absent and any person who can claim kinship with the husband can demand a bracelet. If a man's dip into the pot reveals a poor bracelet he does not hesitate to upbraid the girl who put it there and he may select a better one from those on her arm.

The concluding rite of the ceremony is the act from which it derives its name, the shaving of the wife's head (*mut nyier*) by a member of her husband's family. This may take place after the departure of her companions, for it is a domestic affair of the husband's *gol*, his home, of which the wife is now a member. The shaving of the head signifies this change in her status. People speak of the rite as *woci miem nyiɔtde*, the removal of the hairs of maidenhood, and they say afterwards of the girl *Caa cɛk*, 'She has become a wife'. She is at the same time stripped of all her ornaments, which are divided among her husband's kin, and she is arrayed in new finery provided by her husband. She belongs to his, and not her father's, people now and it is for them to adorn her.

The Birth of a Child

The *mut* is the consummation of marriage, but not its completion, which is the birth of a child. The young wife is now called *cɛk ma kan*, a newly wed. Her parents give her a hut of her own and a sleeping-hide, a brush, and a couple of gourds for ablutions. When her husband comes to visit her in her father's homestead he sleeps with her in this hut. She continues in all other respects to lead the life she led before marriage, and after her husband's visits she hangs up the hide and domestic utensils and sleeps with her unmarried sisters. On these visits her husband stays at a neighbouring homestead as he cannot eat in the home of his parents-in-law and ought not to be seen there at all. When someone tells the wife that her husband has come, so that she may prepare for him, she feigns annoyance or lack of interest, pretending that she is still unmarried, a shyness she keeps up with third persons, though she is at ease when alone with her husband. When everyone is asleep he visits her and spends the night with her, leaving before any of the bride's people are about; her parents are supposed to know nothing of his visits, though, of course, they know all about his movements and it is even said that his mother-in-law may rise especially early and squint through a crack in the door of her hut in order to see him depart. Should he oversleep, and his mother-in-law sees his spears outside her daughter's hut, she makes them forfeit and he would be ashamed to ask for them back. It is not till a child has been born that the husband is accepted by his wife's people as one of themselves; he is then the father of their daughter's child and through the child has a kind of kinship link with them. Till this happens the husband continues to lead the life he lived before marriage, a bachelor life with his younger brothers in their father's byre. His wife visits him only on rare occasions and for a formal purpose, as when, at harvest time, she brings him coverings she has made for the grain on the drying-platforms, or when she takes him a bundle of well-cooked porridge made

4: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1948 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

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862 before the child is weaned, it may not be weaned without the consent of her parents,
602 and I have seen a husband pay several cattle to atone for contravention of this rule. A *kee*, first child, belongs to the home of his maternal grandparents and if he is
603 weaned in his father's home he returns to live with them, a boy till he is initiated and
858 a girl till she is betrothed. This is the rule, though there is variation in practice, depending on the ability of the maternal grandparents to support the child and on the relations between them and their son-in-law.

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591 mother, brings the baby to her husband's home and lays him in the ashes of the hearth in the centre of his grandfather's byre, a rite known as *nong puka*, the bringing to the
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The marriage has thus reached completion through many stages: betrothal ceremony, wedding ceremony, consummation ceremony, the birth of a child, the
[606] bringing of the first-born to his father's byre, and the presentation to the wife of a spoon as a sign of her domestic separation from her family. She comes to her husband's home not as a wife but as a mother whose breasts have suckled a child of their lineage.

586 asked what would happen were he to try to do so
583 I was told that the husband's kin would claim
back their cattle and, if necessary, use force to
431 obtain them. Should a wife leave her husband
in these circumstances the problem of bride-
[587] wealth would probably be solved by the common
Nuer expedient of letting her live as a concubine.

I think it is evident, in view of the facts stated
583 above, that the fear of having to repay bride-
wealth cannot be said to be a very powerful
431 sanction of the marriage union. Nor is there
any evidence of which I am aware that would
● 591 suggest that the greater the number of cattle handed
593 over the more stable the marriage is likely to
prove. On the contrary the poverty of a suitor
may be to his advantage since the parents of the
girl whom he seeks in marriage can insist, and
often do so, that he comes to live in their village,
where they will receive constant aid from him
in hoeing, fishing, building, and herding, and the
accretion to their lineage of both the son-in-law
who comes in course of time to identify his interests
with those of his in-laws, and of his children,
who would otherwise, with their daughter, be
lost to them. A reputation for hard work, courage,
and an amiable character go a long way towards
making up for poverty of stock, especially if the
father of the girl and the father of the youth are
friends or the youth and the girls' brother are
comrades.

581 I am prepared to say definitely that the stability
of Nuer marriage rests on quite other foundations
593 than payments of bridewealth. It is founded on
affection between the spouses, mutual goodwill
between the families of husband and wife, and
moral and legal norms. Nuer girls are not easily
coerced into marriage and it is generally safe
to assume that when a woman lives with her hus-
band it is because she chooses to do so and is
happy in her marriage. By the time a girl is fully
married to a man she knows him well. Usually
he has courted her some time before asking
for her hand and she must give her consent
before his request is granted. She has plenty of
time between the betrothal ceremony and the
ceremony of consummation in which to withdraw
from the marriage should she be reluctant to

11:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

The attitude of the kinsmen depends largely on the widow's behaviour. If she refuses to live with one of them but consents to remain in their village, as a member of their *gol* or homestead, and there bear children to her dead husband by a man who is not of their kin they cannot easily find fault with her, and even if she has not borne her husband two children they are unlikely to divorce her for the children she bears are not only legally of their kin but are born amidst them and reared by them.

A widow is always asked at the gathering of her husband's kinsmen at his mortuary ceremony, on "the day of evil" (*cang giekni*) when they purify the mourners and send the ghost away from them, whom she wishes to live with. I was told that if she refuses the sons and brothers of her dead husband they ask her *Ceke, guri bi wa lum dor kie bi lum cieng?* "O woman do you wish to become a concubine away from the village or to be a concubine at home?" A Nuer told me that on such an occasion *Cek me kere wide yar be lar "Ghan gan ca be wa lum gwadh dodien, Me ca gat coada gur, ba lum golkun"*, "A woman who is not a fool will say, 'I will not seek a lover in another place. Though I do not want a son of my husband I will take a lover in your home'". She will then cohabit with a member of her husband's village, maybe one of his more distant male kinsmen, maybe a villager of a different clan. Everyone is satisfied with this arrangement, for she still remains a member of their *gol* and her lover is a member of their village and he not only begets children for them but also becomes the protector and bread-winner of the surviving members of their dead kinsman's family. Sometimes the lover is not a member of the dead man's village but is a man of a neighbouring village who visits the widow there from time to time to cohabit with her and assist her in horticultural labour.

Widows who decide to leave the homes of their dead husbands often return to their own people and take lovers in the villages of their brothers. Thus, as will be seen later in the charts and diagrams referring to the village of Nyueny, we often find matrilocal and patrilocal residence side by side owing to the return of widows, bringing their children with them, to the homes of their kinsmen. It thus often happens that children are brought up among their maternal relatives.

Often widows neither remain in the homes of their dead husbands nor return to their kinsmen, but go to live with lovers, sometimes in different districts and even in different tribal areas. If their children by their husbands are small they may take them with them so that during childhood they are members of the households of the lovers of their mothers. These men act as foster-fathers to the children.

It is impossible to say in advance which course a widow will pursue. Much depends on the character and social position of the husband's kinsmen and upon the strength of kinship sentiment among them. If there are full brothers of the dead man they may consider it their duty as well as their privilege to retain the services of "their wife", especially if she is young and they are unmarried. If there are only half-brothers of the dead man and still more if there are no brothers at all but only cousins, they have less control over the widow and less sense of obligation to the

11:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

587 768 593 591 dead, so that they may view with equanimity the departure of the widow and her children, having no feelings of close parentage towards the sons and being assured that they will receive whatever bride-wealth is their due on the marriages of the daughters, wherever they may be brought up.

[611] Most depends upon the decision of the widow herself (*riet cek*). If she determines to live away from her husband's village with a stranger his kinsmen warn her that any children she may bear are the children of her husband and that one day they will bring them to their father's home. Among the Eastern Nuer, only if she does something that deeply offends [586] them will they divorce her. Among the Western Nuer they may divorce her if she has not borne her husband two children but how often this is done I cannot say.

Occasionally, I was told, a man directs (*nop*) from his deathbed that a certain kinsman is to live with his wife. It is difficult for a woman to defy [776] such an injunction because Nuer believe that if she does so the ghost of her husband will haunt her and she will cease to bear children or her children will die.

587 611 A widow who lives with a stranger after the death of her husband is called *cek ma lak* and a child born of such a union is called *gat laka*. The children of a widow wherever they are born, or by whomsoever begotten, count as children of her dead husband, the man to whom she was married by payment of cattle, whether she was married to him in his lifetime or vicariously after his death. If the husband dies, or was already dead before his marriage, the actual configuration of the household may alter but the formal structure of the family remains the same. Indeed the family may never be a group of people with real interrelations because the husband and the father may have died many years before his marriage to his wife and the birth of his children. Among Nuer the pater is the husband to the mother. His legal fatherhood is defined by his status to the mother of the children and not by his physiological functions.

587 593 A *cek ma lak* is translated in this paper as " widow-concubine " for she is living simply as a concubine to her lover and he has no legal rights over her. He cannot compel her to live with him and cannot claim compensation if she commits adultery. He has no legal control over the children who can be taken away from him by her husband's kinsmen whenever they choose to remove them. His position is thus very different from that of a man living with his dead brother's wife. If she leaves him he can divorce her and if she commits adultery he can obtain redress. Moreover, he has legal control of the children during their minority and no one can take them from him as he stands in the place of the pater.

The group that results from the union between a man and a widow-concubine when the children are born by the concubine to her lover is a natural family which stands in what is sometimes glaring opposition to the legal family. The corner-stone of the natural family is the genitor who is acting as husband and foster-father. The corner-stone of the legal family is the dead husband and pater. According to circumstances the position of the genitor in a household of this kind may be precarious or his relations to members of his natural family may approximate to

11:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

583 of adulterous unions in which these women have at any time lived. This would be too difficult. The Dok girl of Homestead No. XX is therefore included among the widow-concubines.

The third column lists the children born of thirty-two of these women according to the type of union in which they were born. Nyaleeni ♀ of Homestead No. XXIV is not included as no enquiry was made about her children. This column gives us some rough vital statistics for it shows a total of 109 children, an average of 3.4 children per woman, or, if we exclude the two barren women from this calculation, 3.6 children per woman. Women in advanced pregnancy were counted as having given birth to a single child. I say that these statistics are rough because there can be no doubt that a large number of children who died at birth or in infancy have not been recorded. Indeed no special enquiry into this matter was prosecuted. The number of children born per fertile woman is therefore probably much higher than 3.6, perhaps being as high as 5.0. It is also possible that there are more than 2 barren women in the village.

	Union of 33 women in 1936	Total unions of 33 women	Children of 32 women
Wives in simple legal marriage	3	23	44
Female husbands ..	1	1	—
Wives of female husbands ..	3	3	5
Wives in ghost-marriage ..	5	5	6
Wives in leviritic marriage ..	2	4	12
Widow-concubines	6	14	36
Unmarried concubines ..	3	5	3
Women living in adultery ..	1	—	3
Old women without mates ..	9	—	—

Certain considerations must be kept in mind if a false impresion is not to be created by these figures. Wives of female husbands and wives in ghost-marriage are to all intents and purposes in the same legal position as wives in simple legal marriages. If we include also wives in leviritic marriage we have a total of thirteen women living in one or other form of legal marriage and ten women living in one or other form of concubinage. It [591] must be remembered also that a number of young men of the village have young wives in the villages of their parents-in-law for it is Nuer custom that a wife does not join her husband till after she has weaned her first child.

162 165 The number of widow-concubines and of old women without mates (who are also widows) suggests a very high mortality rate among males. This is partly due to the constant fighting that used to go on, and still to a lesser extent goes on between Nuer. In a number of cases recorded in the village women have been widowed by the violent death of their husbands.

583 The amount of concubinage is remarkable and contrasts with the relatively small number of leviritic unions. The number of divorces recorded is small and this is probably a true index for Nuerland as a whole.

11:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

XII

I have given a description of different types of union found in Nuerland and of the groups that arise from them. I have illustrated each type mainly by quoting examples from the village of Nyueny. I could have drawn on villages in other parts of Nuerland.

Some remarks of a general nature were made in the early part of this paper. Further remarks are given in conclusion but I wish to make it clear that I mention briefly only a few sociological results that arise from such "matrimonial" conditions as those I have described and that I merely sketch some of the problems that lie in the material we have considered.

One important result of widow-concubinage is matrilocal residence, temporary or permanent. I have discussed modes of residence elsewhere and here it is only necessary to show how they are affected by the prevalence of the various types of union which have been reviewed. In simple legal marriage the first child is born and weaned in its maternal grandparents' home and may be brought up there. But it eventually comes to live with its parents in the village of its pater and his kinsmen, for after weaning her first child a wife joins her husband in his village and there her other children are born. That is the normal procedure. In ghost-marriage it is the same. In leviritic marriage the children and their mother generally remain in the home of the dead pater. In widow-concubinage, however, as we have seen, the children are often born and live, at any rate for some years, away from the home of their paternal kinsmen. The children of unmarried concubines live, when they are small, with their mother, whether she remains in their father's home or takes a lover elsewhere. After a boy has been initiated he normally makes his pater's homestead his permanent home. These statements apply particularly to boys. There is less consistency in the case of girls, as already explained.

A glance at Diagram No. X shows how matrilocal and patrilocal modes of residence are found side by side as a consequence of widows cohabiting with lovers in the village of their brothers. "The daughters of Jany" live side by side with the "sons of Jany". Nyaruithni ♀ and Nyawal ♀ are widows living at Nyueny with their children, while Nyaudol ♀ is about to join them. Not on account of widowhood, but for other reasons, Nyadang ♀ also lives here with her husband and family, so that four of the daughters of Jany are living with their children in the hamlet of their kinsfolk.

With reference to this matrilocal cluster Bilieu ♂—Lam ♂ said to me: "I live with Meat ♂ who is my maternal uncle, for he brought me up and I was initiated at his home. We share the same byre. He has one half of the byre and I have the other half. In the cattle-camp also we share the same wind-screen and tether our cattle side by side. My position is just like that of Galuak ♂—Rainen ♂. He shares with Panyuan ♂ and I share with Meat ♂".

Since they live in the village of their maternal kinsfolk these youths with the exception of the sons of Rainen ♂ whose father is resident in the

11:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1945
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

589 village are given matronymics instead of patronymics. Thus at Nyueny
591 one generally speaks of Bilieu ♂—Nyawal ♀ and Malith ♂—Nyaruithni ♀
611 instead of Bilieu ♂—Lam ♂ and Malith ♂—Rwacar ♂, though at the
551 villages of their paters one would speak of them by their true patronymics. One even hears the sons of Rainen ♂, Nhial ♂ and Galuak ♂, referred to after their mothers' name as *gaat Nyadang* ♀, "sons of Nyadang ♀", because they live in the village of their maternal kinsmen. The same nomenclature is to be observed when a son of an unmarried concubine lives with his mother's people, e.g. Cuol ♂—Mer ♀ who was referred to overleaf.

562 Another point of importance which is very obvious from the facts related in this paper is that marital and domestic conditions among the Nuer indicate the high position of women in their society. The matter cannot be discussed at length here and I will only remark that the facts cited show how freely women move among the Nuer. We have seen that widows settle with lovers without hindrance, that many girls rear a family without consenting to marriage, and woman always take their small children with them when they change households, and that sometimes they even marry wives themselves.

611 The social principle of agnatic descent is, by a kind of paradox, traced through the mother, for the rule is that in virtue of payment of bride-wealth all who are born of the mother are children of her husband. Thus all the children of a woman may be children of a man whom their mother has never even seen. Or a woman may bear children by many men yet they all have one pater. Or, yet again, a woman may bear a child by a man to whom she is not married and to whom she never will be married, but this man is her child's pater by payment of a fee.

602 We see herein the fundamental principle that gives structural uniformity to, and thereby explains, the heterogeneous social elements isolated and described in this paper. I refer to the agnatic principle that is one of the most fundamental principles of Nuer social organization. It runs through the whole gamut of social relations, from ecological relations at one end of the scale to cosmological relations at the other end. This principle is not merely that every man must have a pater, and that he traces his descent through his pater, inherits from his pater, and succeeds to his pater's status. These are contained in the principle and are an expression of it, but, in our opinion, the agnatic principle among the Nuer is essentially the tendency of attachment to agnatic groups or lineages. By such attachment a man becomes a social being for his social personality is acquired from his attachment to these groups, from which he derives also, through mutual assistance, the means of existence and security.

At first sight many of the facts stated in this paper seem to be in direct opposition to this principle. Thus if we take the Jany (Kwenwar) cluster at Nueny it is evidently an aggregate of cognates and affines. The same social conditions can probably be found in every Nuer village. The underlying agnatic principle is therefore in glaring contrast to social actualities. But the actualities are always changing and passing while the principle endures.

15: Butt E-4 (No date) 1952 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

cattle has been handed over.(1) A marriage which has reached the final rites may be regarded as a stable union. 584

The first step occurs when a youth reaches an understanding with a girl and, having some of the necessary cattle, asks her consent to marriage. Both families are consulted and arrangements are made for the betrothal *(larcieng)*.

When a definite agreement has been reached about bridewealth cattle, the wedding ceremony *(ngut)* is held at the bride's homestead. The main features of a wedding are: discussions about cattle, which are held in the morning; the invocation over the cattle of the bridewealth, followed by the wedding dance and the wedding sacrifice in the afternoon and evening. Though this ceremony does not conclude the marriage there is every chance, once this point is reached, that the union will be completed. 585

The third of the public ceremonies is the one which, at least among the Eastern Nuer, makes the union legally binding. This is the *mut* (consummation). After it the husband can claim compensation for adultery and the cattle are regarded as marriage cattle and not as a pledge.

Marriage is completed by the birth of a child. Until then the wife sleeps in a hut at her parents' homestead and she remains with her parents until the child is weaned. The first-born child belongs to the home of his maternal grandparents and even if he is weaned in his father's home he returns to live with them. A boy stays with his maternal grandparents until he is initiated, a girl until she is betrothed. The baby is always brought to the father's home for the ceremony of laying him on the ashes of the hearth in the centre of his grandfather's byre, which takes place shortly after birth. 591 603 852

After the weaning, the husband builds his wife a hut in his father's homestead. She goes to live with him as a true wife in that she will now milk his cows and hoe his gardens and not those of her father. She makes a *buor*, a mud fire screen, and the spirit of his lineage comes to dwell there. Later his father tells him to build a byre and gives him a few cows to start a herd.(2) 591

In-Law Relationships

In-law relationships are marked by certain avoidances and displays of respect. Until his first child is born a husband does not openly visit his parents-in-law's village except in some formal capacity. After the birth he makes public visits, but he treats his parents-in-law with great respect and must not eat with them or appear naked before them. When two of three children have been born, a ceremony takes place after which he no longer has to observe these rules and prohibitions. When the father-in-law visits the husband's home and is entertained and given a bull, calf or sheep, his son-in-law may regard him as a father. The only in-law whom a man need not treat with formal respect is his wife's sister. 606 607

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, XVIII, 1948, p.29.
(2) Evans-Pritchard, *Africa*, XVIII, 1948, p.40.